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THE SACRED SYMBOLS AND NUMBERS OF ABORIGINAL AMERICA IN ANCIENT AND MODERN TIMES.

BY

FRANCIS PARRY, F.R.G.S.

SUMMARY.

The Origin of Sacred Numbers ; The Foliated Cross a Memorial to Maize ; The Deification of Corn ; Sun and Death Masks ; The Symbolism of the Serpent Mound ; The Hand Signs of the Colossal Statues.

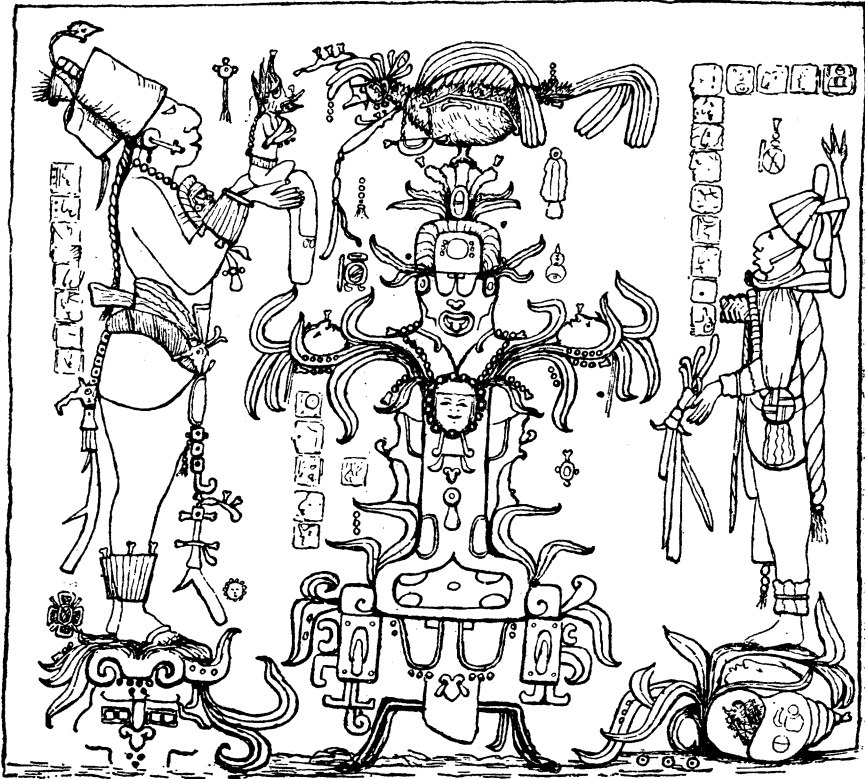
The progress of research has begun to set aside as of secondary value much that was written regarding the aboriginal faiths of America by the explorers of the ruined temples of the central region early in the century.

These authors had one aim in view, and that to discover analogies between the ritual of the builders of these magnificent structures, and the religious systems flourishing in the East prior to the Christian era, and on this insufficient foundation to build up a theory of intercommunication, if not of close contact between the two hemispheres.

The attempt has been abortive, therefore leaving a few inquirers to pursue the old and misleading course, the students of to-day are in the main concentrating effort to record with accuracy everything regarding the ancient peoples, whether great or minute, so long as it is within the limits of this country, and historic, semi-historic, and prehistoric sources are contributing to the general fund of information.

The result of looking inwards for materials to construct a hypothesis, rather than outwards, has been to

get clear of entanglements, and slowly but surely the outlines of an ancient aboriginal religion are being more



THE FOLIATED MAIZE CROSS.

distinctly traced, that is, becoming as important in tradition and history as the faiths of the old world in pagan times.

Prior to the advent of the Incas the inhabitants of the land they conquered believed in an omnipotent deity whom they named Pachacama,* holding him in great

* Commentaries Incas. Hakluyt Society.

reverence as an abstraction—eternal, invisible, undefinable. One who gave life to the universe, of no substance, and not to be represented by symbol or image; but they worshipped him in their hearts.

The Incas set up several deities, the Sun-god being chiefly esteemed, and his image and symbols were conspicuous in their temples.

The marauding Aztec tribe entered the fertile Nahua country to take possession, carrying with them the image of the God of War, their tutelar and chief divinity.

As did the invaders of Peru, the Aztecs established the worship of the deity they held in highest honor, incorporating with it the beliefs of the people they subjugated, and symbols decorating the temples on the arrival of the Spaniards are now known to have been for the major part the sacred emblems of an earlier race.

Their belief, observances and ritual, were accepted over a wide area, and the relics of extinct tribes are evidence of the former existence of a uniform religious symbolism. A careful inquiry into the manners and customs of the American Indian tribes, who have conserved sacred traditional observances demonstrates, that, the archæologist should retrace the path and seek in Central America for the main stronghold of the ancient faith. Though divided by the linguistic bar of dialect, the various sedentary races in respect of the use of emblems, alike in form and significance, are more or less in affinity.

A sacred thing—whether a tree, a stock, or a stone, it matters little—preceded the ideograph of the hieratic writings and the carved symbols and graven image of later days.

The symbolism of the ancient Maya people, the builders of the renowned temples and shrines of Palenque, Uxmal, Chichen Itza, and others in the Mexican territory, is of much interest, not on account of its component parts alone, but as being in touch with, if not identical with the religion of other peoples, inhabitants of the lands comprised in the modern nomenclature of Guatemala, Costa Rica, Honduras and Colombia.

It was based on the worship of Nature and its earliest manifestations recognize a "First cause, a ruler," and reciprocal forces, which found expression in the sign *Ahau*, "The Supreme."



As a glyph, it is inscribed on the memorial slabs of the temples, where it is conspicuous by its frequency and though modified for decorative purposes by the designer, always a priest, the original central characteristics are carefully preserved.

In common with other early symbols, a part of it by the development of thought became of separate use, conveying an idea essentially akin to, though less far-reaching than the whole, and gave expression to an attribute of the Supreme Being. In its entirety, it recognized and was emblematic of origin and of the creation of birds, beasts, insects, the varied species of the vegetable kingdom, and of man.

The partition provided a new hieratic sign and an easily applied emblem, which was so much in vogue that it was universally attached to a certain division of consecrated things, and so attained to the position of a sacred mark.

As three dots, circles or concentric circles, it is oftener

met with than the sign of fuller meaning, the "*Ahau*," and appears on the carved walls of the inner sanctuary, on the altars of the groves, and it is profusely displayed on the richly sculptured stelæ, which are embellished by a mass of artistic symbolic compositions.

Usually, it retained the normal arrangement, • • • but adapted to decoration it is disposed of in a linear manner, primarily signifying "bountiful," it doubtless became symbolical of "abundance."

The Foliated Cross of Palemkè gives due recognition to the abundance of the fruits of the earth in that district, composed of the cruciform, the full visage of a man, the three dots, and the "quetzal," or sacred bird, with for head-gear a long-nosed mask,—these will, as we proceed, be declared to be significant of a special cultivation and worship.

The rulers of the Mayas and the people were alike dependent on local fruitful seasons for food ; taxes were paid in kind, and the sacerdotalists took their recompense according to the yield of the crops ; therefore, scarcity, or granaries well filled, had a powerful influence upon the teeming population.

The priests wore the emblem of plenty on the ceremonial masks,—Palemkè providing instances of the usage.

It is exemplified also on a unique specimen of prehistoric pottery of Guatemala, whose ancient inhabitants were akin to the Mayas. From this vase, which has been lately acquired by the Museum of the University of Pennsylvania, drawings have been taken by the kind permission of the custodian. In dimension six inches in height, by four in diameter, it is of an ochre ground, on which the chief figures are sketched

with a free hand, the artist using a dark pigment. The entire intermediate space is red, after the style of the Dresden Codex. The inscription is on blotches of the color, each containing a hieratic sign, the chief or initial glyph on either side of the vessel tells of its having been designed for sacred purposes. It is of exceptional interest as an early example of glazed ware, and is a



sacred vessel for the use of the temple with hieroglyphs identical with those of the Maya Codices.

On one side is the conventional long-nosed mask of the Serpent or Water-god, on the other a Chan priest, that is, of the celebrated caste, formerly distinguished as the wisest in the country. The priestly head above the initial glyph here found in juxtaposition with the god is evidence of the claim the sacerdotalists made to divine rights, concerning which more has been stated in my recently issued monograph.*

Below the rim or lip is an encircling band, where six kneeling masked worshippers are represented in groups of three. Half are old priests wearing a conical hat, the rest are younger; their head-dress adorned with feathers, is probably that of the novice.

These priests look in one direction, and hold a planting stick decorated with the mystic number three, one group holding it in the right, the remainder in the left hand, and every third individual has the three-dot mark on his face or mask. The planting sticks of the older

* The Sacred Maya Stone of Mexico and its Symbolism.—London, 1893.

men are weighted with stone rings, a method not yet obsolete.

Thus, in the grouping of the persons, in the arrangement of the planting sticks, and the marks worn, the number is several times repeated. The act of wearing a symbol, of pouring out a libation, of planting a seed, ceremonially, would be an appeal to the deity.

The Bishop of Chiapas, Mexico, in A.D. 1692, states with regard to the initiation of neophytes in his diocese for the pagan temples: "The Master imparts the instruction not to one but to three at a time, in order that when officiating together it may not be known which of them exercises the most magical power." *



As to the derivation of the double triad and with respect to the appearance of six priests on the vase and the marks on both sides of the face, reference is made to the final illustration, and the explanation of the use of two triangular figures.

Nothing in the history of religions has been more thoroughly substantiated than the tenacity with which the superstitious have clung to ancient symbolism, and how unlettered priests or privileged persons in a tribe have preserved and transmitted them from generation to generation. There has been no exception to this general rule on the American continent, and the state-

* *Constituciones Diocesanas.* F. N. de la Vega. 1702.

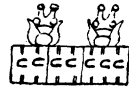
ment that tradition has handed down a record of historical facts, orally delivered, during a period of five hundred years, may be accepted.

Symbols are more ancient than traditions, generally, more to be relied on, and may take us back thousands of years—in tracing their inception.

To return to the three dots, they are to be seen on libation cups from Florida, thrice on a small cup, which suggests the superlative degree; and a tribe inhabiting Northern California places them on hand corn mills. Moreover, the so-called bird-claw mark, of three strokes, radiating over a segment of a circle, has been found in Tennessee mounds, is worn on Moqui masks, and on their bread-stones; Peruvian sun-marked Chipin ware just received declares it to be the abundance sign.

The same sentiment and three-fold combination was embodied in the horse-shoe form during the period of Maya ascendancy, that is to say, the simple style was equivalent to the sign first alluded to; the ornate “sacred stones” of this character are, however, more important and have a wider meaning, and were classified by me in Mexico in the year 1891. A testimonial as to the correctness of this has been since received from the National Museum authorities, who now class them as being representative of fecundity and Nature worship.

This form continued to be used by the Aztecs, during historic times in manuscripts relating to agricultural land, and in rural districts it is part of the pictograph for the names of villages where tilled land had to be demonstrated. The cut reads: “cultivated and productive land-



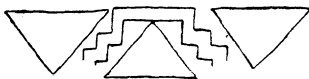
growing flowers." Two years ago the Mission Indians of Southern California were observed by Mr. Rust to be engaged in pagan worship at stated intervals; an inquiry disclosed the fact of their possessing a stone idol of this shape, but of an archaic type. Brought to the World's Fair as an undescribed thing, it was placed in the same class as those more ornamented. When the stone was discovered an assembly had been constituted for worship, and six girls, who for several days had prepared by rites for the occasion, were adorned with garlands and joined a procession to the spot where it was concealed on the mountain side. Corn, meal and pieces of money thrown to the devotees by the leaders denoted profusion, and the ceremonies were of the nature of an invocation to the powers that be to send abundant harvests, food and plenty.

In the lately published Florentine Codex, a Nahua manuscript of the date of the Conquistadores, brought to light by the clever Mrs. Zelia Nuttall, we find a large figure of this form in the funeral chamber, probably, as was frequently done, for interment with the embalmed remains of the chieftain or high priest before which mourners are shown to be weeping.


The multiples of Three were employed for the purpose of artistic decoration.

They testify to the fervent recognition of a favorite symbol or badge, and no better mode of showing devotion to an idea has been devised in our day, as the custom prevails at the time of national or religious observances among the highest civilizations, and especially on holy days are the oldest and most cherished emblems and sacred relics displayed.

South America and the Central region alike favored the triple cloud form, and on the face of the great Sun-god of Tiahuanaca, Peru, the three marks of bounty appear on either cheek ; this number is on his girdle, and thrice three are the heads hanging from it,—mannerisms that it is supposed ante-date the arrival of the Incas, who it is asserted copied and renewed the ancient and sacred emblems of the aborigines.



Applied to decoration it is interwoven into every sacred design, of which the annexed models are examples, the one an earring of a statue at Copan, the other part of the cornice of a temple at Labnah.

The Cliff Dwellers of Colorado perpetuated a triangular figure, of which hereafter. The Zuni Pueblo Indians are thought on sufficient grounds to be their immediate descendants, and on the authority of Mr. Frank H. Cushing, who lived among them, learning their language and their medicine men, the triangle  with them had the force attached to the familiar three dots. The same observer tells of the custom of gathering dew-drops from the spider's web at sun-rise in a specially decorated cup, seed being added,—the union typifying the "nativity of corn." This was forthwith presented to the Great Spirit as an acceptable offering.

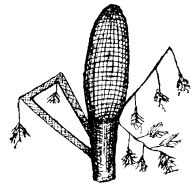
The triangle is also an honored symbolic form with the Moqui Indians of Arizona. They have a goddess*

* Captain John G. Bourke, "The Snake Dance," page 277.

who, like the *Ahau*, was distinguished by having both sexes represented in her own person (a peculiarity which is typified in the "sacred stone" of horse-shoe outline until recently thought to be sacrificial), and has dispensed many favors to the Navajoes, her best gift being corn. The Maya deity of this order was a god.

Woman, that is, the sex, generally, inclusive of the hermaphrodite goddess, is by the Moqui tribe symbolized by a realistic triangle which, for reasons that are sufficient, might be designated "the portal of life," as it has reference to continuity and vitality. As was done with the first glyph or symbol commented upon, this Moqui sign underwent a change, and was diminished by being shorn of its normal characteristics; then, as an ordinary linear object or triangle, it embodies the sacred number three, and becomes, as the three dots of the Mayas were, a constantly employed mark, decoration and symbol, adapted to the same purpose as the Southern emblem, namely, as representative of fecundity, and applicable to anything to which the idea of "prolific" could attach.


The dadoes of the pueblo houses and the blankets of the women are adorned with it, ceremonies could not take place without it, and in the ceremonial dances, where girls of a mature age are made to take part, they, being on the verge of their entrance into life as wives and mothers in prospective, carry grouped emblems in the hand.*



The cluster so held consists of a head of ripe Maize or seed-corn, placed alongside of a triangle of conspicuous

* American Anthropologist, Volume 5.

proportions, and feathers; symbols which together constitute an appeal, an invocation for Divine favor—"send abundance of corn; make us happy mothers." It is an echo of the voice of man in a remoter age—"That our sons may be as plants grown up in their youth; that our garners may be full, affording all manner of store."

 A common arrangement of the symbol is the sacred three multiplied to the superlative sense of "most abundant," which triplet of the normal sign is never exceeded, agreeing with the practice and usage of ancient America. Unfortunately, added decoration has begun to spoil and obliterate the old form, and it is called a butterfly.

It is a coincidence that there is evidence of a phallic nature leading to the conclusion that the God of Fecundity gave place to a goddess among the Cliff Dwellers, who transmitted their faith in her to the Zuñis. The Aztecs recognized a female rather than a male deity of this order; in that respect differing with the earlier Maya race, who held to the sterner sex for the most part, as emblems from Copan and Uxmal testify.

Santa Lucia had a goddess and a god of this character, as though the Quichees were undecided in their allegiance; but the small gold images of Costa Rica, Colombia, and Peru are chiefly of the masculine type.

This succession and change of belief in the individual, though the sentiment is unaltered, being plainly marked, may, in the absence of dates, aid in the formation of a chronological order having the Maya deity as the first known in America.

The God of the Air, the Rain God, and the protector

of lakes and streams, had the sacred number Four assigned to him ; the use of it unfolded with the exercise of the imagination. The sky in which he roamed and the earth over which his influence was felt were traversed by the imaginary lines drawn from the cardinal points of the compass, and the equal-limbed cross became representative of and the ordinary symbol of this deity.

“The God of the Winds with the Aztecs bore as his sign of office a mace like the cross of a bishop, his robe was strewn with them like flowers, and its adoration was throughout connected with his worship.” Thus wrote an eminent Americanist a quarter of a century ago, and the statement is confirmed, but the Mayas and the tribes with them were the earlier worshippers of this divinity, placing him at one time, and the temples prove it to have been for a lengthy period, as the superior god of their pantheon. The constant allusion to him in hieroglyphics in hieratic writings and in the larger carved stone records, where his effigy is never absent, supports and gives substance to the traditions concerning him. He was Quetzalcoatl.

After twenty years of deliberation, Dr. Brinton, in his “Nagualism,” issued this year (page 49), though late, sees a connection between the cult of the Mayas and the Aztecs, and assents to the presence of the phallic element in ancient times, though formerly denying it. He mistakes in stating the serpent represented it ; his reference to the Vatican Codex being unfortunate ; also, in the making a frog form symbolic of water. This last is a Sun-symbol.

The cruciform is the centre object of the renowned

Altar Slabs of Palemkè, while in less grand proportions it is widely distributed in other temples of Chiapas and Yucatan, as the emblem of the serpent.



The simple form occurs on the wampum belts, robes, and the ceremonial paraphernalia of tribes now dwelling to the north of Mexico, the second is also of frequent occurrence, the medallions represent those worn by the officiating priests at Palemkè. The more complex offers difficulties ; nevertheless, by deduction it seems to allude to the practice of storing water and its application by artificial means to agricultural purposes. The St. Andrew's Cross is in the drawings of the Maya Codices usually attached to rainfall, while the cross-hatching being there indicative of water, it is assumed the example here given, taken from Costa Rica pottery, may be deemed to be of similar intention.

The four-cornered diamond figure was, also, relegated to the service of the artist priests, it decorates the sacred vessels, and the folded bands of their apparel, and bands round the lower limbs of robed personages are plaited so as to produce it. Other four-limbed designs were in vogue as wind and cloud emblems.

The central three of the illustrations are from the Costa Rica district ; right and left are very ancient Peruvian and Maya signs ; the fourth resembles the mark on the crested serpent of the Codex Cortesianus, identifying it as the symbol of the God of the Air. The crudest of these forms recalls the poet Long-

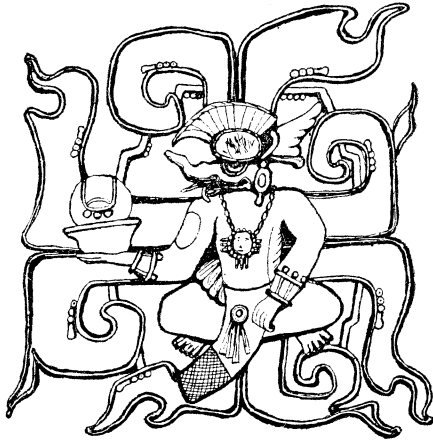
fellow's description of the picture writing invented by Hiawatha and his sign for Gitche Manito the Mighty:

“ He, the Master of Life was painted,
As an egg with points projecting
To the four winds of the heavens:
Everywhere is the Great Spirit
Was the meaning of this symbol.”





Copan is a storehouse of symbolic designs and provides us with instances of evolution in ancient artistic shapes. It may be more particularly noted in a development from the normal cruciform, a progression observable in the “swastika” here presented, which acquires the unusual double form, doubtless, with the intention of imparting a deeper tone to the symbolic idea. “Crown him with many crowns” seems in this part of the world to be paralleled by intensifying applied symbolism.

With our present knowledge it is impossible to assign to the American swastika a classification other than as pertaining to the God of the Air, Water and Winds, the rain-bringer; consequently the illustration is representative of Kukulcan, or a priest wearing



a long-nosed mask personates the deity. The cut exhibits a mask boar-like in style. At Copan a peccary's skull was exhumed with the remains of a chief by Mr. Saville; it bears incised signs and an excellent graphic sketch of three running peccaries. Three is significant; the animals may symbolize "running water." In the MS. Troano a peccary is conspicuous with a serpent (water) the full extent of the page immediately below it.

The ordinary  has been unearthed from mounds so far north as  Ohio and is widely distributed. To those who hold views with respect to it opposed to what has been already expressed the larger of the two following Costa Rica specimens will be perplexing, as it does not support the notion of the sun theory. Its curves turn inwards from the horizontal line and do not describe a circuit. The large double figure is also a variant.

Near the equator several crops are gathered annually; the seasons are divided by rainy and not rainy times, and the four seasons are less sharply defined than in more northern latitudes, consequently, the Aztec use of the swastika may not refer to the quarters of our year.



Both diagrams contain the sacred number Four thrice,—the cross, the diamond, and the spiral.

Proof of the continuity of the use of the number is afforded by the statements of Mr. J. W. Fewkes in a paper on "The Pál-lü-lü-kon-ti," a Tusayan ceremony observed in 1893 by the Moqui Indians.

It began with ceremonial corn-planting in moistened sand four days before the new moon. In Guatemala the natives aver the sap of forest trees rises as the moon gains strength, and do not, therefore, cut timber except during its last quarter.

As to the corn, it consisted of eight varieties, and four days after being sown it was peeping through the sand in the lodges. Four days later the Village Orator announced the day of assembly, by which time the corn-blade was as high as the width of the hand; at this date the members of the kiva or lodge began a feast of four days, which ended and twelve days being accomplished the ceremonial days proper were entered upon. They consisted of eight, and the record shown in corn-kernels was laid out in groups of four. This done, eight priests in grotesque costumes went round the village. The Abbé Brasseur de Bourbourg, in his Maya vocabulary, has *Iximab*, "to count the grains of corn, to cast lots, to make magic by such means." The similarity of usage suggests a common origin of the ceremonial observances.

The name given to the festival, though difficult of translation, is compounded of terms applicable to moving water and a snake. The rattlesnake was the type of clouds and water in Central America, and this elucidates the employment of his sacred number, as "*kan*" in Maya was the word for the numeral four and the serpent. During the ceremonies a portable screen representing the sky with movable discs for the sun, is invaded by serpent effigies, who are thrust through the apertures where the discs had been. On being withdrawn the suns reappear, a sort of recognition of

the need of both the sunshine and showers at seed-time.

The act of sprinkling prayer meal was observed, and the entire rites were an appeal to the bounty of the powers of Nature, among them an indirect allusion to germination which requires no particularization, being somewhat crude.

Though the Maya tribes, with their earlier records and lengthy possession of the country, claim through the antiquarian to have been the source and centre of the civilization of the aboriginal population, the historical position assigned to the Aztecs by Spanish authors places them prominently forward in middle-age narrative. They were regarded as the originators of the hieratic ceremonies and ritual; their religion has been alluded to as having a base separate from that of their predecessors, making the task of briefly pointing out the connection between them an unavoidable matter.

The investigator who will not admit the recognition of the germinating principle of life in the American aboriginal cults, or who denies the existence of the Maya sacerdotal influence over the Nahuas, Peruvians, and living tribes, is incapable of linking these various widespread sections of men together by a demonstrable tie, an ethnological affinity, the common use of a compact number of unchanging sacred symbols.

The temples of Palemkè, in the Maya country, are more especially renowned for the so-called altar-slabs of The Cross, The Sun, and The Foliated Cross, a nomenclature adopted by explorers having slight indication of the true significance of these monuments.

The first illustration of the series presented here is of the last-named slabs, which are covered by a cluster of artistically arranged emblems, in the shape of a cruciform tree applied as a mural carving in relief. With the native races of our day similar emblems and doll-like symbolically clad figures, with marked mask-like features, are grouped in loose pieces against the wall of the medicine-man or priest's lodge. The ancient and modern combinations taken in their entirety are not the surroundings of a sacrificial altar, they are those of a shrine where petitions are put forth and adoration made to the Five living principles in unison.

On page 173 there is a cut of a Moqui processional bouquet of objects denoting an association of ideas in respect to certain Nature forces of the animal and vegetable kingdom. Emblems equivalent to them are held in the hands of the officiating personages, the priests, on the slabs of the Foliated Cross. The Archpriest, surrounded by and decorated with symbols, raises a manikin figure, representative of man the offspring of the woman, towards heaven, using the realistic form of full meaning rather than one calling for interpretation such as the triangle. Primarily the act has the widest application and is an invocation of the multitude through the medium of the priest; it may also include a dedication of children of the Chan or Serpent caste of priests, and of the nobles, the privileged class, to the service of the temples. In each case where this presentation occurs,—for it is given on the three sets of slabs mentioned,—the manikin is reproduced, and the stiff-bearing and tight-clinging mask sug-

gests an effigy, not a child lately born. The priests of The Cross of the Sun, on the altar slabs of Casa No. 3, Palemkè, each present a figure, without doubt representative of the male and female, one robust, the other of a finer structure.* Fervent heat is here associated with natural tendencies. This conclusion rejects the idea of human sacrifice being offered; moreover, in Nature worship life is revered.

Maya ceremonies took place before a crowd of worshippers who bowed before the Unseen, the First Causes, the dual forces, and as with uplifted arms the priest uttered his chant and the throng bowed, worshipping, would not the feeling of their hearts be, "we the children of men are thine," and their prayer, "send us posterity?" We can fancy the stream of people ascending one side of the pyramid, the throng at the entrance to the shrine, the demeanor of those passing slowly through its doors to descend the long flight of steps on the other side. The view, bathed in bright sunlight, extending over the native city, the crowded ways, the ascending hum of voices, the booths, the vendors of symbols and effigies robed in parti-colored paper, perishable all but their baked-clay heads, found strewn thickly over the sites of many ancient Maya cities.

One similarity to modern rites having been proved, the next in importance requires no particular analysis, as there is "*prima facie*" evidence of its being identical with the practice of living Indians, the Moquis, and is, in fact, the ceremony that carries us back with an unbroken line from the nineteenth century to a period

* Incidents of Travel in Central America, Chiapas and Yucatan. John L. Stephens. 1841. Frontispiece, and p. 351.

five hundred years prior to the discoveries of Columbus, if not longer.

That is presupposing that the corn-growing of the native races had its first conception in the Maya district, and that its extent, noticed by the navigators of the sixteenth century, was the result of a continuous spread of cultivation during a period of five or six hundred years prior to their reaching the northern part of the hemisphere.

The assistant priest, with outstretched hand, presents a growing Maize Plant, not to the masked bird of symbolic form, but to the Five united deities. So carefully was the plant carved by the artist that after the long lapse of years since its outline was pecked and chiselled by stone implements it is still a well-defined figure; its roots and stem are partially enveloped by decorative cloth or paper, while it is further adorned by pendant streamers of a like material.

The attitude of this priest is less demonstrative than that of his colleague; nevertheless, his parted lips are engaged in the service, and it may be assumed the assembled multitude are led by him in an appeal to the powers of Heaven for the preservation of the sown Corn, for a fruitful season and abundant crops.

To note the survival in the present day of these ancient practices in several districts divided by considerable distance, is to certify to the sustained influence of the views of the Mayas among the native races, and to the prominent part they played in the propagation of certain religious rites and customs having relation more especially to agricultural pursuits and the peaceful arts, without which sedentary occupations a national

state or condition can hardly be attained to. A recent traveller in New Mexico, in relating what he saw and heard, laughs at the archæologists, at the same time rendering them good service by simply and accurately giving in detail an interesting account of the manners and customs of the people. He found the Pueblo Indians adoring two equal First Causes,—a father and mother, god and goddess; the four cardinal points of the Winds were recognized; they had a serpent or snake dance, made corn-meal invocations, and sung a refrain regarding the “birth of corn.” At Cochiti, in a native ceremonial procession, the head-boards were adorned with the **T** sign, seen in the initial glyph of the Maya slab, and practices connected with the old faith were closely copied in those customary in Arizona.

To wean a large body of Indians from old manners and separate them wholly from pagan ways has been so difficult a thing to accomplish, it has brought about an occasional compromise, and in this semi-civilized community the least harmful old customs are permitted. Thus, on a festival they brought baskets containing symbols of things, of which they desired the increase, to the priest of the Christian Church; they comprised clay figures of cattle, sheep, goats, corn, wheat, &c.; upon these they desired the blessing of St. John to be invoked and their wishes fulfilled.* It is impossible to distinguish between this and the practice at Palemkè.

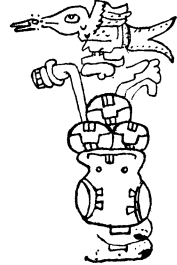
Chronological continuity being beyond our present power, a return to the past and the central region is excusable.

The main motive of the Foliated Cross has hitherto

* The Land of Poco Tiempo.—CHAS. F. LUMMIS.

defied a solution, yet my conjectures published fourteen months ago fell little short of the truth which persistent effort has at last disclosed. Evidently erected as a memorial to the Chan priests, the worshippers of Kukulcan, it seemed to express in its wide-spreading verdure, a tribute to the aptitude of the priestly fraternity in introducing new methods of husbandry in their day, perhaps about A.D. 1100. The modern Moqui tribe, two thousand miles distant from the Maya temple ruins, by the conservation and practice of an ancient ritual and the display of sacred symbols, handed down from father to son for thirty generations, if not more, has furnished a clue to the mystery of this particular monument. May we not now consistently allude to the ancient Americans and their manners and customs, seeing their universality? The Corn ear in the Moqui ceremony is identical in its meaning with the Maize plant structure of the Foliated Cross.

This Palemkè monument, a record in stone of the value set upon the development of the cultivation of Maize by the Chan priests, is in accord with the scant Maya manuscripts. We find illustrations of the granary well stored in the hieratic writings ideographically given in the shape of a huge earthen pot or corn measure heaped up, with three written signs *kan*, the local term for Corn, the sacred triplet conveying the idea of great abundance. Of this, Plate 23, in the MS. Troano, has an instance, and the store pot, resting on the coils of a serpent, with the sun-bird hovering above, suggests germinating moisture and heat,



adding the male and female principles, with offspring to make the full complement. Plate 29 shows the young plant sprouting from a corn glyph. Plate 36 has an animistic head, resembling a deer, by its associations in various cases taken to be a symbol for land under cultivation. This rests on a corn glyph, meaning "land producing corn." With the Aztecs or Nahuas this symbol was also recognized. At the opening of the Dresden Codex there is a spirited drawing of a like quadrupedal creature, conquered, subdued, made useful, under cultivation, with his master, a masked priest, astride of him and triumphantly waving trophies of growing vegetation in either hand. Refer-



ence is also made to Plate 16 in this manuscript, as in it is a squatting female figure with productive pendant breasts. She has a weighty back burden marked with a corn glyph, three springing germs, the *imix* sign, *Ahau*, the dual cause of fertilization, and crowning all a corn plant. In Plate 47 is a conventional four-footed land figure pierced with a planting stick, which is constantly used in this method of delineation, and has been mistaken for an offensive or defensive weapon, being, in fact, to modernize it, a corn drill and hoe.

A close inspection of the slab establishes its connection with the quotations from the hieratic writings. It has to be shown that while the shrine was built to the praise of the Gods for the fruits of the earth, it is for Maize thanks is more particularly given and for it invocations are raised. The view of the tablet suggests an artistic adaptation of leaves only. The heads laid within them are at the first glance a perplexing matter.

Their position is natural when, in substitution of them, heads or ears of corn springing from the axils of the leaves are placed. This is the elucidation, as the cruciform plant is an adapted cereal form, that of the Maize plant, with heads, perhaps portraits of celebrated priests connected with agricultural pursuits, inserted. The mystic three is recorded in the numbers of the masks or heads, which thus make no equipoise, and two are treated in a remarkable manner in that the long hair and a lock are seen, the former hanging down as a corn tassel might, while two have nose ornaments of an unknown meaning, though noticeable on many slabs at Copan and Palemkè as a symbol applied in various ornamental ways.

Now that the pronounced intention of the tablet has come to light, it is plainly seen to be a corn seed or kernel, a symbolic form, a bottle-stopper shape, and the puzzle being explained it falls into the general arrangement of designs on carved monuments. Marks on it signify heat and water.

In many sculptured slabs it is added to the three dots of plenty and on the Foliated Cross is here and there, meaning "abundance of corn"; but the masked bird of Quetzalcoatl has three nodules on his snout which represent "flowing water," not kernels or seeds,—the high-priest, however, has the kernel on his wrist-bands and anklets.

The heads, with locks of hair, of this monument are not the sole examples known, as in Plate 34 of the MS. Troano, there is another placed on a pyramidal structure bearing the Maya sign *cab* or land; the question arises, Should this head with those of the slabs be taken to mean Maize? Accepted as symbolic of the cereal, the figure has something to do with "corn lands."

The Aztec Codices have been said to contain nothing showing that the priests were under the spell of Maya sacerdotal teaching.

Having, previously, combatted this opinion, the opening of the field of research to a further extent by the declaration of the meaning of unknown symbols on the Palemkè tablets led to an examination of the Nahua pictorial writings, and they in the matter of the ceremonies and invocations, vessels and altars, demonstrate that the Maya ritual and their temple observances were closely followed. Always supposing the Maya writings and stone monuments to be the more ancient, their mannerism and practice with regard to sacred things with unimportant deviation runs through the hieratic records of the Aztecs.

From the Mayas they took the idea of the cruciform trees, the long-nosed mask, the sun-bird, the diabolical sun-mask, the granary pot, planting sticks, lacerating knives, ceremonial pipes, altar forms, the costume of the high priests and the animism of land symbolism, with the Yun and Yin symbols of the sexes and their progeny.

These like things are set forth in the chronicles of the Borgia Codex * which consists of seventy-six plates devoted to temple ceremonies connected with tillage and the preparation of land for the growth of the staple food of the country. The chief deities are those of the longer settled Mayas, the God of Fecundity being partially displaced by a goddess of whom the Spaniards wrote as having a shrine near the City of Mexico; it is related that she bore the titles of the Mother of the Gods, the Goddess of Corn, and the Fruit-bearer. The

* Vol. 3. Kingsborough.

happiness or perfection of men and gods seems bound up in this ancient reverence for things brought into a triad. Plate 63 contains a curious contest between creatures symbolic of the Sun and Water ; the Maya replica is in Plate 36 of the Dresden Codex, and the ordinary emblems are quaintly drawn, but do not deviate, being copied from the older people. The divergence is imaginary, the style of the Aztec artist constituting the real difference.

Those who personify the gods usually occupy a chair throne in outline of the cloud form, with serpent-head supports, the concentric sun circle being the surface decoration.

Schoolcraft furnished the American poet with folklore stories from the Odjibwas-Algonquins, who held Indian corn in great reverence, to make use of his own expression, and in Plate 68 of the Borgian Codex there is a grotesque drawing illustrative of a custom usual both in the north and south, performed by a woman.

Taking her machecata or principal garment in her hand, she dragged it round the field. This was thought to ensure a prolific crop and to prevent the assault of insects, as it was supposed they could not creep over the charmed line. *

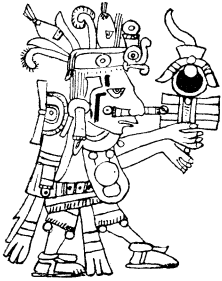


Hiawatha says to Laughing Water :

“ Rise up from your bed in silence,
Lay aside your garments wholly,
Walk around the fields you planted,
Round the borders of the corn fields,
Covered by your tresses only,
Robed with darkness as a garment,
Thus the fields shall be more fruitful.”

* Algic Researches.

The Aztec drawings of symbols of Corn are peculiar. The heads or ears of the cereal are often out of proportion to, that is, larger than other objects, made into the semblance of a man's face by the addition of eyes



and mouth, the silken tassel of the plant crowning the top, a mode of treatment akin to the introduction of human heads into the Maya slab composition. One of the priests from Plate 25 of the Borgia Codex, is given in the illustration. In the head-gear the full corn ears are worn ;

in the hand is a Maize plant growing in a sacred vessel, bearing a dark disc representative of the Sun ; the long-nosed god is a frontal ornament.

The Vatican Codex has a god with a Corn-head (page 55), and as the priests wore on the head the emblem of the god whose worship they were conducting, the many instances of their wearing Corn tells of the deification of Maize. On page 62 there is a plant with the male spikelet on a terminal central stalk. The major part of the manuscripts make much of Corn. The Vienna Codex affords an example of kernels for divination and the use of sacred numbers. Plate 52 has a priest who disposes them in three rows of four = 12, and two rows = 8, which may have reference to the twenty days of the Maya month.

Taken in all the ancient manuscripts of the Mayas and Nahuas are few in number ; they afford, however, interesting examples of manners and customs, and being the productions of the priests, proof of an almost identical religious worship is established. That Nagual-

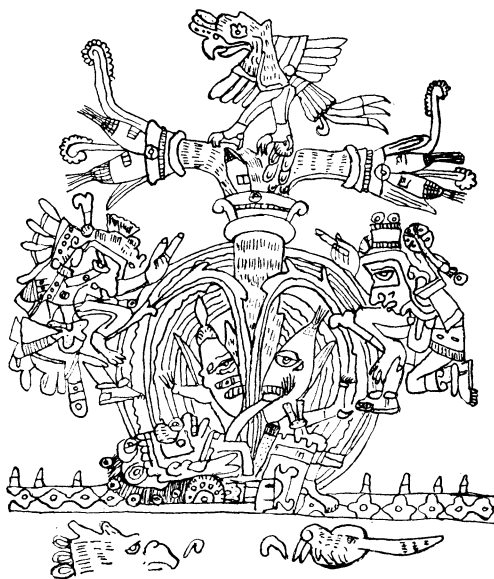
ism, sorcery and worse grew up as excrescences upon the original belief is admitted, and there is ample proof by historians of the worship of numerous deities in their day ; notwithstanding, the hieratic writings of both nations contain but the sentiment of the Palemkè slabs. Attempts to fit the names of recorded gods and goddesses to figures in the Aztec manuscripts have been made with a small amount of success.

Take any of them, however named, they carry the Maya emblems of the Serpent and the Sun as predominant, therefore the minor gods are at any rate subsidiary to the ancient deities.

Chavero has in his wide research into the relics of antiquity strewn over Mexico made surprising efforts to surmount the various difficulties encountered in the interpretation of emblems. His remarks on the slabs of Palemkè allow the presence of the *acatl*, the Nahua seed-form, the veritable *lingam*, in the stem of two cruciform trees of the slabs, his argument leads up to the conclusion, from Aztec investigation. Leaving study of the Maya emblems till a later day, he has lost the opportunity of being the first to state that this backbone of the aboriginal faith was peculiar to the more ancient people. In an endeavor to prove the slabs to indicate something more than the symbols peculiar to a Nature Worship, he claims for them a notable position as recording a cycle of years. This is imaginary—also, his opinion as to the “calavera” and *quetzal*, the one the base, the other the apex of The Cross, next shown, being the emblems of the evening and morning star, is not to be received until after scrutiny.

In order to prove to demonstration the resemblance

between the mannerisms of the two rival nations whose manuscripts and carved slabs have been considered, attention is directed to a fac-simile, now first called a



Cruciform Maize Cross of the Aztecs, taken from the Borgian Codex.* Concerning this the Mexican archæologist states in a description at the foot that it is a “correccion del calendario en el gran ciclo de 1040 años.” The Maya tablets are accompanied by hieroglyphics, and they may have started the idea of a cycle. The Nahua MS. has none, and for this reason its dissection may be proceeded with. It is said by Chavero to be a fruit-bearing tree, having great connection with the Palemkè crosses. Two deities, *Tsontemoc* and *Quetzalcoatl*, adore it, and two lights, the two periods of a star, form the base of this calendar, “las dos luces

* Mexico, al traves de los siglos, 1887. Page 291.

los dos períodos de la estrella cuya combinacion forma la base del calendario."

A simple view of the design declares it to be the shrine of the several deities. To those who are propagators, the male and the female principles, their produce, in this case Corn a staple product, and to the essential elements of the Sun, with its vital heat, and Water, with its invigorating freshness; these are the salient features of the structure.

The attendant priests are correctly named. They are watching the action of streams of water from the circular "aguada" (in the original MS., colored blue), as it is directed to the roots of the corn plant. The two so-called "lights" are ears of corn sessile between the husks; the actual base is a Sun figure heavily masked; the "skull," with feet, over which Dr. Rau and Dr. Brinton contended without result.

Thus, there appears to be nothing to warrant the construction of the hypothesis bringing the morning and evening stars with the calendar into connection with the cruciform trees, wherever they may be located. Outside the diagram, below the flat surface, marked, apparently, for young corn plants at regular intervals in irrigated land, two heads are sketched which are of the "rabbit," Aztec land emblem *tochtli*, and a bird similar to the full figure at the apex of the tree, which seems to be a combined form, sun-like as to the mask, and appertaining to the God of the Air and Waters, as to the *quetzal* feathers of the tail.

This variation in the bird form is noticeable in the sacred vessels of the Cliff-Dwelling, ancient people of the State of Chihuahua, brought to New York by Dr.

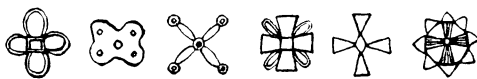
Lumholtz. On them it is round as a quail. The Moqui type—Mr. Fewkes prefers to call them Hopi—is by this careful observer in his Hemenway South-western Expedition journals, termed the *pà-tsro*, water-bird or snipe. Whatever the species he was always the Thunder-bird.

The number four was freely wrought into the carvings of the numerous architectural remains of Central America.

It had a rival, however, in the sacred Five, which, though appropriated for a period to the Sun-God, was applied later in a fuller sense as the combined symbol of the chief divinities.

As denoting the Sun, the Mayas, during the time they were in the grasp and under the teachings of the Chans, gave it comparatively small prominence; Kukulcan, or Quetzalcoatl, as he is better known in semi-historic annals, being favored with peculiar distinction.

Sun symbols were always revered, but there are fashions even in the use of religious emblems, and it was after a long time of comparative retirement that they are made conspicuous under Aztec or Nahua rule. The subjoined examples are from Santa Lucia, Palemkè, the Cliff Dwellers, the Fejérvary MS. and the Apaches. Each figure is composed of at least five parts:



The ordinary sun symbol was a full-faced visage in a circle—or the circle. In Ohio, the circle, crescent, cross and horseshoe are forms in association with the mound altars.

The flower symbol of the sun, the second in line, has not as yet been recognized in its full emblematic aspect, although in association with the misnamed "skull" sun-mask of the tablets, altars, seats, and stelæ at Palemkè and Copan, where its presence is, as in other places of the Mayas, a sure indication of Sun-worship. A refutation of the theory on which the old nomenclature of "skull-mask" was based is given in my monograph on the "Sacred Stone," pages 12 and 33, and the controversy should end, seeing, that while the flower symbol is usually placed above or on the forehead of the so-called skull, its special connection with the sun is abundantly set forth in an Indian invocation, of which the text is preserved among the writings of an early historian.

This appeal to the Sun begins with words descriptive of the emblem and the deity it symbolized,—“Shining Rose, light-giving Rose, &c.” *

On Stela A, at Copan, the form occurs on six masks deviating from the normal type, with filed teeth, applied as ornaments, right and left of the statue, and read as a hieroglyph is *kin*, “the sun,” according to Brasseur and other authorities.

The Sun-mask proper is frequent in the Maya MSS. The death mask is rarely met with, and in the Nahua pictographs the last mentioned is so like the first it cannot be classified except by its hue or its surroundings.

The Maya mask is grotesque, and carries a vegetating germ in the eye when carved on stone, taking a realistic form in the hieratic writings. The Nahuas or Aztecs repeated the style of the ancients; a diabolical

* “Manual de Ministros.” De la Serna, p. 35. This writer gives “the red haired one” as a term to express the fire spirit.

grinning skull was their emblem of the life-giver, a travesty on the original idea of the setting sun's appearance.

The Borgian Codex is remarkable in respect of the use of it, while in the other codices it is more or less modified. That it was a bright sun emblem is proved by the Maya Codex Cortesianus where it is in the calendar to the East, while on the left of the diagram is an obscure disappearing emblem of the West, portrayed by a mummy with a blackened head—The dying day.

There are two instances of the mask resting in the bend of the "sacred stone" during mourning for the dead.

A deity wearing the darkened mask is entitled "el dios de los finidos" by Herrera, and to uphold the view of the outline of the mask undergoing no change, nevertheless, being applicable to two phases and capable of a double meaning, the Aztec word *tonalli* is cited, which being expressive of both "heat and the soul" to blot out or render obscure the emblem of the sun, the heat-giver, would, symbolically, be an equivalent to the condition of the body after the spirit had left it.

A sun priest of the Vatican Codex, page 106, is introduced to show the Aztec custom in the death chamber. Sitting behind the body, which is wrapped in mummy cloth, his head is wrapped in dark coverings, a black mask covers the upper part of the face and in his right hand is the flower emblem. He represents the ended life, heat, and motion of man,—the shadow passing over the vitality of the individual and the gloomy



nature of its close, by the eclipse of the powers of the sun, an emblem of the withdrawal of the day and consequently of the obscurity attendant on night and death.

Allusion must now be made to a combined worship, and a right view of it will render clearer an analysis of the ancient rites practiced by the existing native races. It comprised Five principles.

The union was fitting, the original Three made the unalterable base, while between the two completing the polyarchy, the Sun and the Serpent, what appeared to be a never-ending claim to peculiar recognition is discernible, probably, owing to the variations of weather, a drought or an inundation, gentle rains and moderate heat ; in fact, anything favorable or unfavorable to agriculture, would affect the minds of a rural population, having constant resort to a crafty priesthood officiating before Nature's shrine. The transcendancy of the Serpent-god, in the absence of a written history, is not precisely accounted for, but the conclusion arrived at, after carefully weighing the evidence afforded by the records graven in stone, is that, although they are not fully deciphered, the proofs are ample to show the sacerdotalists attached to the service of this divinity had considerably advanced in the peaceful arts, and more particularly had acquired proficiency in agricultural science.* They were skilled in the application of an improved system of irrigation, and employed many

* Professor Harshberger, of the University of Pennsylvania, has recently described by many proofs, botanical and ethnological, the home of Maize or Indian Corn to have been the seat of the Maya chiefs, and that its distribution throughout North and South America was from the district they ruled over.

husbandmen; this circumstance, with their wealth, knowledge and success, added to the fact of their temple precincts being the repository of letters and sacred things, enabled them to command the respect and devotion of the people at large.

The tradition respecting the wisdom of the deity, Quetzalcoatl, or the Plumed Serpent, may be applied to the priestly sect who adored him and claimed to be equal with him.

Diagrams of a combined symbolism connected with worship and composite ideographs of the principal deities are well distributed throughout the two continents; so, having produced those of the southern and central regions, elsewhere, northern examples may now have place; nevertheless, the grandeur of the southern chronicles, temples of gigantic emblems and semi-civilization, cast less elaborate idealism into the background.

The triangle will be considered as a northern emblem.

The mystery enveloping the history of the Cliff Dwellers has led to a close scrutiny of their ancient manners and customs. They erected stone structures, were potters, tilled the ground; while the women spun, wove and cared for domesticated creatures.

The relics of their worship indicate an intention parallel to the general tendency, with a minor difference in the introduction of a symbolic figure to the exclusion of the three dots. Our search is for the Quintuple which, discovered, takes with them the "triskeles" outline, and the multiples of three are marked, nevertheless, the five are here; in the triangle

the old foundation truths are crystallized "tria juncta in uno," having, it may be presumed, the value symbolically attached to it by the Zunis and the Mayas, that is, of the Father, the Mother and the Offspring; the centre of the figure is a simple circle accepted everywhere as a figure of the Sun; the flying or waving arms graphically attest to a connection with the Winds, and if confirmation of this is required it is seen in the three-step cloud-form, a common southern sign. The absence of the cruciform is a peculiarity.



The design has a distinct allusion in the triples to the desire for abundance, the main feature being the union of the Five deities to whom might suitably be assigned the name of The Inseparables.

The antiquity of this combination is remote; its prevalence tells of the superstitious regard it was held in, and the impress made by it upon the imagination of the aboriginal races. The poverty-stricken tribes, the large and flourishing communities north and south of the equatorial line alike recognized it, until the incoming of Western culture set it aside.

The Mound Builders admittedly belonged to a distant epoch and of the archaic features, with which their works are stamped, by far the most salient are those connected with sacred things. The famous Serpent Mound of Adams County, Ohio, now protected from desecration as a memorial of unsurpassed pre-historic interest, is a relic of ancient pagan worship.

Its exact "raison d'être" continues to be discussed.




This colossal earthwork has an extreme measure-

ment of 1348 feet, with a width of 20 feet or thereabouts in the narrower formation. Placed on rising ground, as approached from the river an oval form first comes into view, a point that, looking backwards, overlooks and gives a prospect through which the stream flows, dividing into three forks or parts,—the mystic three.

In rear of this eastwards is the so-called serpent's head, some say "on guard."* It is a mixtilinear triangle adapted in part to the oval in front of it; following the main figure to the extent of its caudated length, it bends to all points of the compass, then taking a turn southwest it terminates in a triple coil.



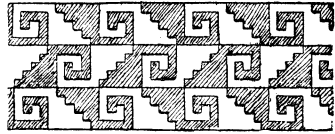
Hypothetical notions resting on a partial analogy, between this combination and Eastern emblems, had led good observers to slight the materials best calculated to aid in the reasonable explanation of it, checking the application of data near at hand;—the one corrective is to show that the required knowledge lies within American boundaries.

Taking the terminating coil of the mound as the first section to be classified, it is found to be a fac-simile of the ordinary wind sign  often scratched by the least intelligent savage  of the continent on slate gorgets, and on  rocks and caverns, devoted to worship, a custom practically unlimited. The

* The Century, April, 1890.

representations are of the usual forms, the last in the artistic hands of the Zapotecs became the grecque ornament of the Mitla temples.

The tortuous winding of the serpent's body is the aboriginal typical cloud form, and the head, a serpent's head, is the



well-known Maya conventional emblem of the Rain-god. Nine-tenths of the entire conception is by this analysis pronounced to be a monster figure of the God of the Air, the great divinity more particularly honored by the inhabitants of the peninsula of Yucatan in historic times, notably at Merida, and by their ancestors.

On katuns, in the historic writings, and prominently as the initial glyph of inscriptions in the temples,

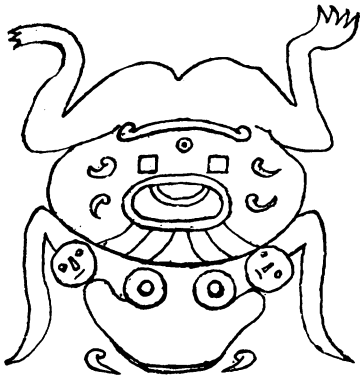


the serpent's head, or a skull symbolizing the Water-God, is introduced. The serpent's head of the mound, apart from the trunk, is a triangle; its inner lines are still more clearly designed than the outermost, rendering it impossible to suppose the diagram to be purposeless or superfluous, seeing that an angle would have sufficed to depict the extended jaws of a snake. Indubitably, the three-sided form has a significance, and though previously passed over unnoticed, it is not venturesome to apportion to it the pregnant meaning it takes with the Zuñis, Moquis and the ancient Cliff-Dwellers, or to take it to be equivalent to the triangle on the gold ornament or amulet from the temples of Costa Rica, a five-fold combined sacred object exhibited at Chicago, and that it perpetuates the Maya sen-

timent, father, mother, offspring, of the *Ahau*. Thus an unbroken, connecting thread of religious affinity is discerned, which extends into South America, from Costa Rica, through Guatemala, Western Mexico, enters the United States, and is everywhere westward.

Reiteration is the rule, and this ascertained, the multiple of three is at once visible in the three sides of the triangle, the three convolutions of the serpent's body, and the three coils of his tail.

Four of the sustaining principles of Nature having been discovered in the mound,—to complete the Five, it is necessary to include the oviform figure. It and the circle were equally the Sun emblems of Central America, and the Western aspect given it accords with the practice of that district, especially with that of the Pacific coast, in personating the setting sun as the object of their adoration. The Mexican antiquarian Chavero has "la puesta del sol," as a carving worthy of remark. He produces an example of an image in relief, a fabulous and formidable looking creature. Its fellow or congener is here exemplified, the drawing being of a cast from Copan in the possession of the Peabody Museum, Cambridge. This quaint shape is carved on jade amulets. Their green color may allude to young verdure, and be also an emblem of water, of which this frog-form is to a few archæologists, a type,—an error ;



for as the Sun it takes its correct place, bringing two germinating forces together on the amulet *i. e.*, heat and water.

The late Mr. Owens stated that the natives under his control called the steep-sided structures of Copan "seats of the caciques," which accords with the sketch given by Catherwood of a priestly figure occupying a throne-seat ornamented by two puma's heads.

These stone objects are almost invariably two-headed, and that known as Altar O. has characteristics worthy of notice.* It is a monolith, covered with massed sculpture of curling feathers, circular markings, serpent's jaws, long clawed limbs, and disjointed square-teethed masks; also, subsidiary to the general arrangement a slight carving on the plain conoidal ends. On the lower end this consists of two masculine figures, one wearing a ceremonial head-dress; above them is a symbolic inscription, consisting of a fish glyph, bearing a circular cross-hatched mark, which, being interpreted, is in the Maya language "*cay*" [fish], also "priest," † the mark it bears reads "of the serpent"; the higher end affords final, because cumulative evidence of the rectitude of my nomenclature of the descending and sprawling quadrupedal form, in that it is here placed alone below the "*cay*" glyph. The sprouting germ sign observable in the eye of the sun masks, is on the fish symbol, informing us that "the priest of the sun" shared this seat in common with the first mentioned. The earth, the clouds, the sea, sections of the country, running streams,

* Maudslay. *Archæology*. Plate 85.

† This is a play upon words. *Ah-cay* is "a fisherman," while *Ah-kay* is "a chanter, a singing man, a priest intoning,"—the fish symbol is a rebus.

were represented by animistic figures ; the sun is not exceptional in being so symbolized.

A Spanish artist of the sixteenth century, whose India-ink portrait of the Aztec king, Montezuma, was in the Rábida collection of the World's Fair, emblazoned

- the monarch's shield with a device of five marks,
- which, though it might be attributed to an

European origin, is, nevertheless, of this country, and has a similar place in a second portrait published in the well illustrated work on America from the pen of the Librarian of Harvard University.

Perhaps it is the sacred cipher and sign manual of the king, who was both ruler and head of the State religion, vicegerent on earth of all the gods, and, therefore, more particularly of the oldest and most revered, the Five principal deities of ancient America. But the numerous instances of their representation by compound symbols, rather than by groups of any one design, leave the question open, as to whether the shield mark should be assigned to them or that popular deity of historic times, the Sun.

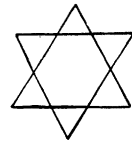
Though rarely met with, there are ample reasons for considering the sign to be hieratic, and its antiquity seems to be assured by its presence in cup-form marking on a boulder monument near Orizaba.

Those skilled in esoteric mysteries practiced in ages past, and the fraternities of Freemasons now in active operation, may take some interest in the higher sacred number Six carved on the entablature of the East façade of a wing of the ruined palace or temple of Uxmal, Yucatan.

This number, sacred to the Deity, is on the cheeks

of the great idol, and on the colossal head at Collo-Collo, Peru. Disposed in dots at the corners of two triangles it has been shown to be a caste mark of the priests, astrologers, or nagualists, young and old, dedicated to the service of The God in ancient temples and modern lodges.

Taken in its world-wide and masonic signification it is an all-embracing expression of Cosmos, and here, that is, in Central America, we are constrained, in the absence of sufficient local aids to its interpretation, to adopt the general view, namely, to assign to this six-sided figure the well-known formula attaching to it, "The father, mother, and the engendered. The earth, the sun or fire, water." "The God of All." The emblem is so translated, in keeping with those to which reference has been made, and its best ideographic expression is to be seen in the composite symbolic representation, crowned with the Sun-bird head, of the Dresden Codex. The double triangle in Yucatan was noticed fifty years ago in the centre of a sun disc,* but for its identification by means of a photograph, I am indebted to Dr. A. Le Plongeon.



Chavero's explanation of the diagram in a double though half form (Vol. I, page 8), is that a base traversed by an acute angle, represented the rays of the sun among both the Mayas and Aztecs, and a temple dedicated to this deity is given in another part of the book, with the cornice ornamented by this device.

In occult science the hands have in all ages played a silent, though important part ; therefore, in the Central

* Rambles in Yucatan. B. M. Morgan. 1843. P. 158.

American region, abounding with signs and symbols, their employment as accessories is looked for and discovered in the colossal effigies of the Copan district, where each principal statue has the thumb and fingers posed so as to exhibit the sacred numbers of six or four. The ceremonial jadite axe, weighing $229\frac{3}{10}$ ounces, unearthed at Oaxaca, Mexico, and deposited in the Natural History Museum of New York, has a huge head on its main part, with the arms, the lower limbs wanting, on the blade; with closed fingers, the hands one above the other, having the thumbs extended.

Peruvian pottery, devoted to hallowed purposes and laid in the ancient tombs, often consists of water vessels with a neck or upright stem resting on a semicircular pipe forming a handle. Lately, observing it on the back of a creature erect and salient, the bulk of the vessel being the frog-form of the Sun, the side bearing an elongated Serpent,—the grouping suggested that the strange topmost and much perpetuated shape is none other than *Ahau* (page 166) and represents the male and female principles in Nature.

On summing up the evidence as to the source of the aboriginal religion of the American continents, it is impossible not to recognize the fact that the Maya influence was a potent factor in the formation of the main element of this pagan faith. The culture of the rulers of the Yucatan districts and of those affiliated to them by linguistic ties, exceeded that of the inhabitants of any other part of this hemisphere. In art, letters, symbolism, architecture, agriculture and astrology, they were pre-eminent; as producers of wealth and capable rulers they were likewise unrivalled. The

Incas were in many respects inferior to them, certainly in letters.

Their language can be traced in the names of principal places from Peru to Arizona; their religious symbolism was accepted from Brazil to Lake Superior; and ruined sites of temples founded by them dot the Mexican States, notably in Central America, and are, also, in the vicinity of Querétaro, Jalisco, Zacatecas, Durango, and Chihuahua, these latter marking a route or highway to the north, the road by which intercommunication no doubt took place with distant tribes, rather than by way of the strong opposing stream of the Father of Rivers, the mighty Mississippi.

Further research will, it is expected, confirm the ideas here developed; being based on the association of things, with adherence to the pervading sentiment of the surroundings, they will probably be of more worth than interpretation by analogy, which has been avoided except in the instance of the last given symbol.

The ancient religion of America, as it comes to light, assumes nobler proportions and is Cosmogonic. When explorations in the central region reveal greater things and expand our view, it is possible that in the halcyon days of the aborigines, thousands of years ago, it was coeval with the old faiths of the Eastern Hemisphere, and will eventually rank with those which hold a prominent place, not a tribal, a national place in the religions of the world before the advent of Christianity.

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